

Self-Reported Health Status

Definition: Health status is self-reported by people responding to the state Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS; see technical note). Among other questions, respondents are asked about their general health status and the number of days during the past 30 days when their physical or mental health was not good or kept them from usual activities.

Summary

Adults responding to the state Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) are asked “Would you say that in general your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?” In 1994, 88.7% (± 1.2) of all respondents said their health was either excellent, very good, or good, a slight drop from the previous year.

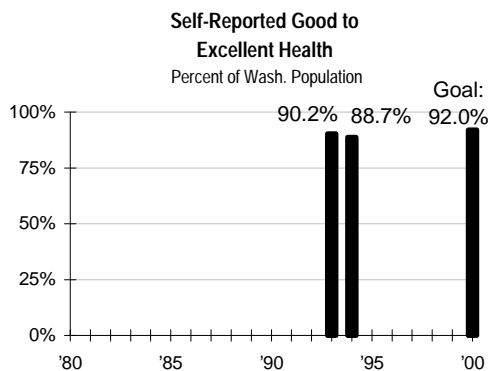
There were no significant differences between male and female responses to this question. Among different age groups, only those over 65 had a significantly lower percentage of persons saying their health was good to excellent.

Income and education levels appear to be the strongest predictors of self-reported health status; those with low income and those with less than a high school education are significantly less likely to report their health as good to excellent.

Time Trends

Data on this subject have been collected consistently in Washington only since 1993. The chart below shows the percent of respondents who said their health was good to excellent. As more data accumulate, there will be some basis for evaluating progress toward the year 2000 goal.

Year 2000 Goal



Washington's goal is to increase the percentage of adults reporting excellent, very good, or good health to at least 92% by 2000.

Geographic Variation

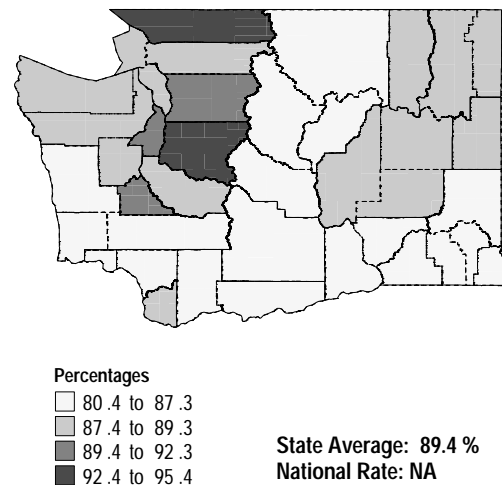
The map below shows variation by geographic region for the two available years combined (1993 and 1994). Because the BRFS sample is too small in many parts of the state to represent individual counties, contiguous counties with small populations are combined to form geographic regions large enough for statistically reliable analyses. The largest counties stand alone in this analysis. The proportion of people reporting their health as good to excellent ranged from a high of 95.4% (± 3.4) to a low of 80.4% (± 7.1).

The counties or regions with the highest percentage of people reporting good to excellent health were:

- Whatcom
- King
- Thurston
- Snohomish

The counties or regions with the lowest percentage of people reporting good to excellent

Adults Who Self Reported Good to Excellent Health
Percentage by Region, 1993 - 1994



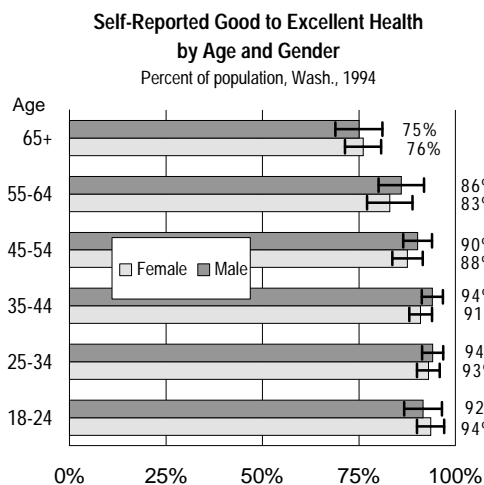
health were:

- Cowlitz/Klickitat/Skamania/Wahkiakum
- Grays Harbor/Lewis/Pacific
- Benton/Franklin
- Chelan/Douglas/Kittitas/Okanogan

Age and Gender

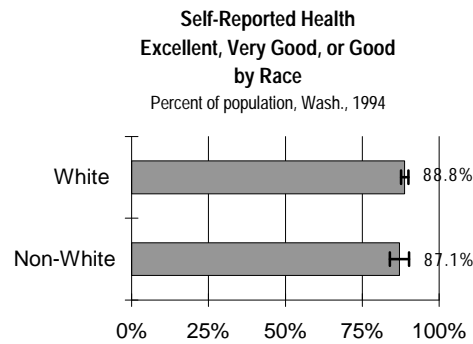
In most age groups, a slightly higher percentage of males reported good to excellent health, but the differences were not statistically significant in any of the age groups. The following charts show observed data points with 95% confidence intervals (See Appendix for an explanation of confidence intervals).

In general, the percentage of people reporting good to excellent health decreased somewhat after age 34, but the only age group having a statistically significant lower percentage than other groups was the over 65 group.



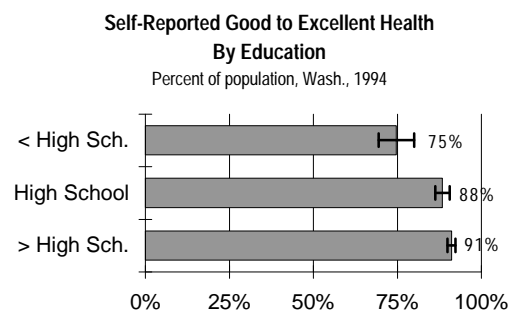
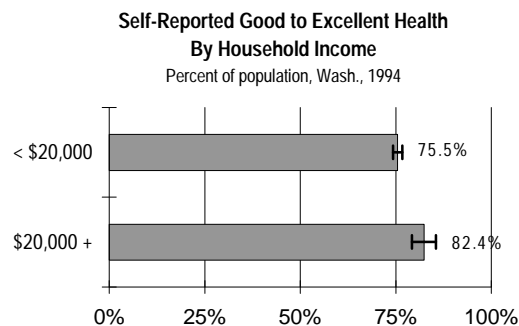
Race and Ethnicity

Among non-whites, a slightly lower percentage of people reported good to excellent health, but the difference from whites was not statistically significant.



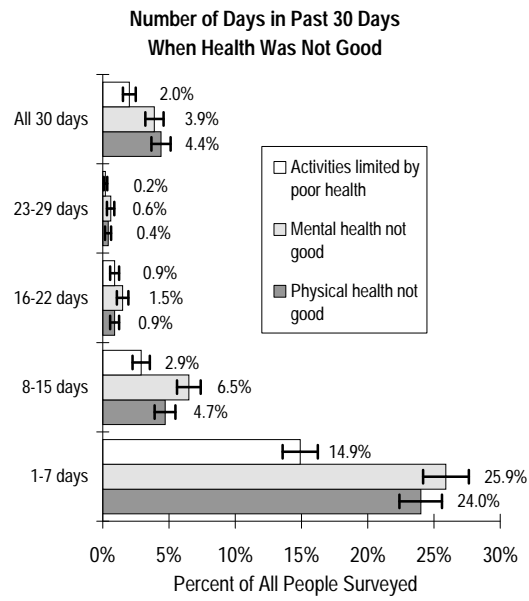
Income and Education

This is where significant differences appear. Both people with low household income and less than a high school education report good to excellent health significantly less often than more affluent and better educated people.



Other Measures

BRFS respondents are asked questions about the number of days in the past 30 days when their mental health was not good, when their physical health was not good, and when their activities were limited by poor health. The chart on the next page summarizes the results of those questions for the entire population surveyed.



Data Sources

Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS)

For More Information

Washington Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics.